



Staffing Advisory Section

TIME-IN-GRADE RESTRICTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

ST-003

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For Additional Information: 703-696-6301, Team 4; Staffing Advisory 3, DSN 426-6301

Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), SUBPART F

We receive numerous calls about applying Time-in-Grade (TIG) restrictions, especially 5 CFR 300.605(b). Confusion arises because we often want to link *quality of experience* or *specialized experience* directly to TIG restrictions.

Time-in-grade is the 52-week requirement Federal employees in competitive service General Schedule (GS) positions at GS-5 and above must serve before they are eligible for promotion (advancement) to the next grade level. (5 CFR 300.604)

Generally, we fill positions with current GS employees who are in the same line of work, i.e., a GS-318-5 to a GS-318-6. When applicants are GS employees in the same line of work, the issue is very clear-cut. If they meet TIG, then they meet *specialized experience* requirements and visa versa.

However, it is very important to remember that TIG is an entirely separate issue from *quality of experience* or *specialized experience*. An employee may meet TIG, but not have the necessary specialized experience needed for promotion.

For instance, after one year, a GS-201-12, Personnel Management Specialist would have both TIG and *specialized experience* for promotion to a GS-201-13. However, he or she most likely would not have the necessary *specialized experience* needed for promotion to a GS-334-13 position despite meeting the TIG requirement. Keeping TIG and *specialized experience* requirements separate is especially important when dealing with Federal employees in non-GS positions.

Q. If I have a non-GS employee applying for my position, would I apply 5 CFR 300.605(b) to determine qualifications?

A. No. You would not use the provisions in 5 CFR 300.605(b) to qualify employees for a position; these provisions are not qualification requirements. You must ensure applicants meet the criteria found in the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Operating Manual

for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions, and verify that they have the appropriate length and level of experience for the position.

Q. Exactly when would I apply 5 CFR 300.605(b)?

A. TIG requirements apply only to employees who have held a competitive service, general schedule position in the last 52 weeks. All Federal civilian service is creditable at the required or higher (or equivalent) grade for TIG purposes. You apply 5 CFR 300.605(b) when applicants have previous non-GS Federal experience and are current competitive service GS employees. For example:

In October 1999, a Federal Wage System (FWS) employee, WG-10, step 5 making \$16.57/hour applies for a competitive service GS-7 position. The applicant is rated qualified, referred, and selected. In April 2000, the same employee applies for a GS-9 position. TIG is now applicable because the individual is a competitive service GS employee. You determine the employee qualified based on previous experience using the OPM Qualification Standards, but find only 6 months of GS service as a GS-7 for TIG purposes. Since all previous WG experience is creditable for TIG purposes, we apply the provisions of 5 CFR 300.605(b) to determine the equivalent GS grade that the WG experience can be credited for TIG purposes.

- Step 1. Annualize basic pay for the WG-10, $\$16.57 \times 2087 = \$34,582$;
- Step 2. Get the General Schedule in effect when the WG basic pay was earned;
- Step 3. Compare annualized salary against step 4 of the 1999 GS pay schedule.

In 1999 basic pay for a GS-9, step 4 was \$34,315; a GS-10, step 4 was \$37,788. Since the rate of pay for the 1999 WG position falls between the representative rates for a GS-9 and GS-10, TIG is credited at the higher grade. The employee is entitled to receive TIG credit at the GS-10 level based on the WG position. The employee meets the TIG requirements for all positions GS-11 and below. As a result, the employee can be referred for the GS-9.